

# NEWS

From the Office of

## Bill Postmus

Chairman/First District Supervisor  
San Bernardino County

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For information, contact  
Brad Mitzelfelt (909) 387-4830

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### **SUPERVISORS NAME POSTMUS CHAIRMAN OF COUNTY BOARD** *– Hesperia Resident is First High Desert Board Chairman in a Decade –*

SAN BERNARDINO – For the first time since 1995, the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors has selected a High Desert Supervisor to be its Chairman. First District Supervisor Bill Postmus was unanimously elected Chairman today at the Board's biennial Organizational Meeting. The Board also unanimously selected Second District Supervisor Paul Biane of Rancho Cucamonga as its Vice-Chairman for the same two-year term of 2005-2006.

Postmus thanked his colleagues "for the confidence you've placed in me," adding that "I also understand the responsibilities you have entrusted to me." Postmus observed that San Bernardino County's Charter gives its Supervisors "uncommon" powers, such as their prerogative to appoint supervisors to fill vacancies, which has been done twice in the past year.

San Bernardino County's Charter, adopted in 1912, designates the Board Chairman as the "general executive agent of the Board." According to the Charter:

It shall be (The Chairman's) duty, subject to regulation and control by the Board, to exercise general supervision over the official conduct of all County officers and officers of all districts and other subdivisions of the County charged with the assessment, collection, safekeeping, management, or disbursement of public revenue; also over all County institutions, buildings and property. He shall report to the Board from time to time with such recommendations as he shall deem proper.

Chairman Postmus added that he will do his best to lead the Board, intending to help each Supervisor meet the needs of the residents of his or her district. Added Postmus, "And as the Charter demands, I intend to make recommendations from time to time on ways I would like to perhaps do things differently than in the past." He said he will strive to make San Bernardino County government, with more than 16,000 employees serving almost 2 million residents, a standard to which other large urban and rural counties aspire.

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Chairman Postmus described his plans to focus on three main priorities:

- (1) "To work in conjunction with the County's General Plan and Development Code Update to ensure responsible growth policies while working with cities and neighboring counties to improve the regional transportation system;
- (2) "To restructure the financial organization of the County Fire Department to ensure future solvency and to maximize service levels; and
- (3) "To improve and increase economic development efforts to attract and retain employers in the region, bringing quality jobs closer to the homes of the County's residents."

Mr. Postmus said he will make economic development a top County priority "by looking at the County's economic development organization, its funding and its programs, and creating an economic development strategy that will take advantage of the current economic boom."

The Chairman announced his intention to ask the Board on January 11 to contract with the County's economist, John Husing, to update and expand an economic development strategy for formal adoption by the Board of Supervisors. Such a plan was initially drafted in February 2000, but was not formally adopted.

"Dr. Husing's draft plan, although never formally adopted by the Board, has been used as a basic framework for the County's current economic development program," Postmus said.

"The County has made some significant progress in the area of economic development. For example, we opened business resource centers, which assist employers with job training, recruitment assistance, site-searching assistance, help working with local cities, financing, permit assistance and other services."

But despite such progress, the County still lacks a formal economic development strategy approved by the Board as a basic decision-making tool. "I propose to resurrect, update, finalize and ultimately adopt and implement such a strategic tool," Postmus said.

Chairman Postmus was first elected to the Board of Supervisors in December 2000. He was re-elected in March 2004 to a second four-year term representing America's largest county district, encompassing 17,500 of the County's 20,000 square miles. Mr. Postmus has been credited with increasing the amount of tax dollars received by certain cities when annexing new territory. He also has been responsible for increasing the County's support for fire suppression and emergency response services, and he secured unprecedented levels of County funds for High Desert libraries, parks and road projects.